

Noongar Waangkiny

A learner's guide to Noongar

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Contents

Foreword

The original *A Learner's Guide to Noongar* was written and compiled by Lois Spehn-Jackson as part of her ongoing contribution to the Noongar Language Project as a Language Consultant.

Since Lois's original work there have been numerous additions and changes to the Noongar Learner's Guide to meet the needs of Noongar language revival with inclusion of and reference to the Noongar dialects and a grammar terms glossary. This edition of *Noongar Waangkiny – A Learner's Guide to Noongar*, has been updated by Lois Spehn-Jackson with significant additions in the use of suffixes. The reclaimed suffixes were introduced at a Noongar advanced writing workshop in April 2015.

The recent work of the Noongar Language Project has aimed to include examples in the three Noongar dialects where possible. This edition of the *Noongar Learner's Guide* includes some dialect variations and we encourage Noongar speakers and writers to include their own dialects whenever possible. It would greatly assist the Noongar Language team if you could send us examples of your dialect variations for inclusion in later editions.

Maree Klesch, Project Manager, Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education.

Lois Spehn-Jackson's original acknowledgements

In compiling *A Learner's Guide to Noongar* with the support of *Dandjoo Moordiyap Dabakarn – Noongar Language Proje*ct, I wish to acknowledge the knowledge, time and support which I have been privileged to access during my time as an Aboriginal Languages Officer and Consultant.

I would specifically like to acknowledge the enormous amount of contributions made by the late Mrs Rose Whitehurst in reviving the Noongar language. Rose compiled the first Noongar Dictionary which was the work of Noongar people for Noongar people, and it is through Rose's groundwork in Noongar, a revival of the language has been possible.

Special thanks must also go to the two Elders with whom I have worked closely for many years during which time they willingly shared their knowledge and language with me: Mrs Kathy Yarran and Mrs Janet Collard.

I would also like to acknowledge the work of Wilf Douglas who gave the Noongar language teachers' permission to use the information and recordings which he made.[1]

Lois Spehn-Jackson, Aboriginal Languages Consultant

1 Douglas, W.D 1976, 2nd edn, The Aboriginal Languages of the South West of Australia, Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Canberra..

Introduction

To be able to say and use words, phrases and sentences in Noongar, it is important to know the sounds.

Noongar was originally an oral language. Written recordings were made of Noongar by Europeans over many years but their different styles caused a great deal of confusion.

Dandjoo Moordiyap Dabakarn has based its orthography (spelling system) on historical records and a series of Noongar language and culture meetings that took place in the south-west from the mid 1980s to late 1990s.

- Marribank 1985
- Wellington Mills 1990
- Narrogin 1991
- Dryandra Noongar Language Festival 1992
- Marribank 1997

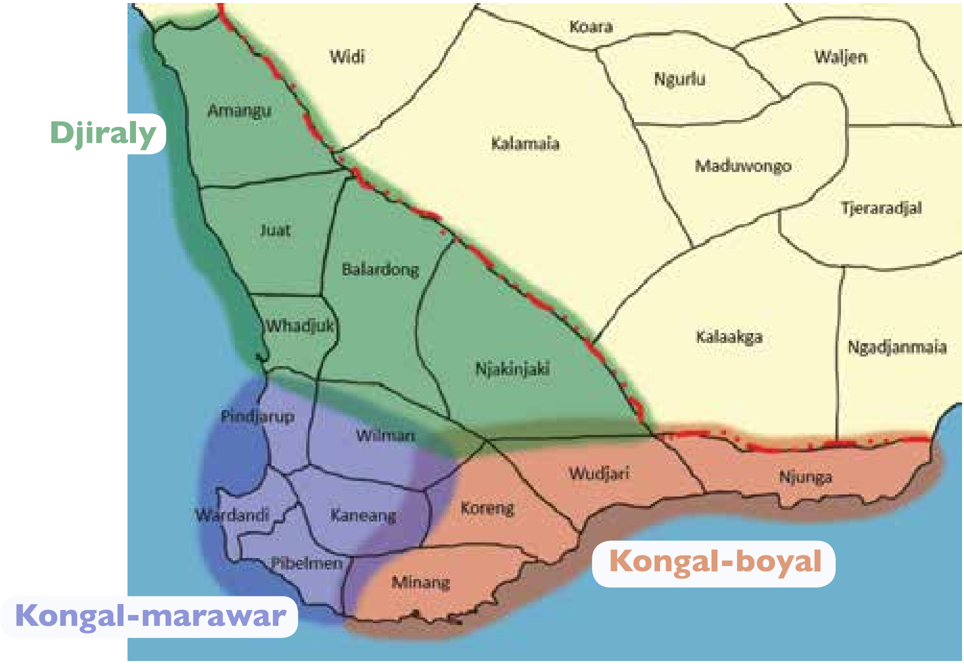
Hundreds of Noongar Elders and their families took part in these meetings and language festivals to discuss the Noongar language situation, document language and work towards developing a Noongar language course and dictionary. The first Noongar Language and Culture Centre was established in Bunbury at the Bunbury Aboriginal Progress Association in 1986. This small group of dedicated people took the lead in revitalising Noongar language and coordinating inclusive community workshops.

It was at the 1997 meeting at Marribank, attended by approximately 200 Noongars, that an agreement was made on a standard orthography to be used for teaching Noongar in schools. There was a unanimous vote that the language would be spelt Nyoongar. The establishment of a standard spelling system allowed for consistency across language programs and the development of a set of learning materials that could be shared across Noongar country. It is acknowledged that the re-emerging Noongar has been developed under the influence of English and that there is still considerable work to be done to bring the Noongar language closer to its original voice.

Different spellings of Noongar

Nyoongar, Njonga, Nyungar, Nyunga, Yunga, Nyungah.

Noongar boodja wongki – Noongar dialect map



Underlay map courtesy of Tindale, N 1930 (uploaded by Croft, JD 2007), Aboriginal Groups of the South West of Western Australia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Wh adjuk1.jpg

Note: the dialect regions are an approximation of how the original 14 recognised Noongar clans have been drawn into three main dialects.

- Djiraly: Northern dialect
- Kongal-boyal: South-eastern dialect
- Kongal-marawar: South-western dialect

The *Dandjoo Moordiyap Dabakarn – Noongar Language Project* has developed resources over the last ten years. The project team has worked to extend the scope of documentation and acknowledgement of dialects and the differences in pronunciation, words and language structure.

Noongar dialects

The Noongar language has appeared in written form for many years, probably since first Eurpoean contact. Different people in many different locations have collected Noongar language; sometimes linguists and sometimes other professionals or European settlers who were interested in Noongar language and culture. This has resulted in many different

spellings of Noongar words, but the main differences occur because of the range of dialects in Noongar country. Most differences occur in pronunciation of similar words, but different dialects may also use completely different words in some instances. (See table on p. 5)

Rose Whitehurst stated that the Noongar language has about 12 dialects other researchers suggest up to 15 Noongar dialects. Sometimes people use clan names for dialects names to ensure readers know the country and the people their stories belong to. Over the years Noongar language has changed so that today we mostly work with three main dialects:

Kongal-boyal wongki – South-eastern dialect

From Denmark and Albany in the far south, east probably as far as Esperance and Ravensthorpe and north through what is now the wheat-belt. The south-eastern dialect has longer vowel sounds in some instances and the sound **k** and **g** are interchangeable. The **g** often occurs as an initial sound as in the English word **g**o.

Djiraly wongki – Northern dialect

Around Perth and on the coastal plain north to the Moore River, inland to New Norcia and east through to what is now the wheat-belt.

Kongal-marawar wongki – South-western dialect

Murray River east to Kojonup and south to Augusta. This dialect has been referred to as the Wardandi Dordenap dialect in previous publications. This dialect has a number of words ending in **er**, e.g. yorker, bilyer, yongker, etc.

The table below gives some examples of Noongar dialect variations, Dench 1994.

English	Northern	South-western	South-eastern
spear	kidji	kitj	kitja
woman	yaku	yaka	yok
tooth	ngarlku	ngorlka	ngorlak
witchety grub	bardi	berda	bert

1. The Noongar sounds and alphabet

It is important to be able to say words (pronounce words) before learning to read the printed word. Always ask a Noongar person how to pronounce sounds or words. There are some sounds which are not in English but the sound is always constant, unlike in English where one sound may be said a number of ways. E.g. the English **a**, as in c**a**t, m**a**ny and p**a**th. Once the Noongar sounds are known, it becomes easier to pronounce words.

1.1 Noongar vowels

Sound	What it sounds like in English
a	as in **a**bout or medi**a** or b**u**t
aa	like **ar** as in c**ar** or p**ar**t or f**a**ther
e	as in t**e**n
i	as in h**i**t, b**i**t
o	as in l**a**w or c**ou**rt
oo	as in b**oo**k or sometimes b**oo**t

1.2 Noongar consonants

Sound	What it sounds like in English
b	between English **b** and **p**, like the **p** in s**p**in
bw	similar to **bw**ana *(Swahili word for boss)*
d	between English **d** and **t**, like the **t** in s**t**ring
dj	as in ju**dge**
dw	similar to **tw**itch
k	between English **g** and **k**, like the **k** in s**k**ill
kw	like **q**uiet
-l	as in **l**amp or ni**l**
-ly	like mi**ll**ion, *never quickly*
m	as in **m**an
n	as in **n**il
ng	like **ng** in si**ng**, n*ever like ng in finger*
ny	like o**ni**on, **nu**isance, *never like many*
-p	between English **b** and **p**, like the **p** in s**p**in
-r	as in **r**an or ca**r**ol
-rd-	like saying d with tip of tongue turned back, ca**rd**
-rt	like saying t with tip of tongue turned back, ca**rt**
-rl	like saying l with tip of tongue turned back, whi**rl**
-rn	like saying n with tip of tongue turned back, to**rn**
-t	between English **d** and **t**, like the **t** in s**t**ing
-tj	like the **ch** in **ch**air but sometimes like the **j** in **j**am
w	as in **w**et
y	as in **y**ell

2. Sounding words using the Noongar syllables

Words are made by putting consonants and vowels together. These are known as syllables. In the Noongar language, there are many syllables but they are always pronounced/sounded out in the same way. This makes it much easier for a person learning Noongar.

ba	ka	na	-rla
baa	kaa	naa	-rlaa
be	ke	ne	-rle
bi	ki	ni	-rli
bo	ko	no	-rlo
boo	koo	noo	-rloo
bwa	kwa	nga	-rna
bwaa	kwaa	ngaa	-rnaa
bwe	kwe	nge	-rne
bwi	kwi	ngi	-rni
bwo	kwo	ngo	-rno
bwoo	kwoo	ngoo	-rnoo
da	-la	nya	wa
daa	-laa	nyaa	waa
de	-le	nye	we
di	-li	nyi	wi
do	-lo	nyo	wo
doo	-loo	nyoo	woo
dja	-lya	-ra	ya
djaa	-lyaa	-raa	yaa
dje	-lye	-re	ye
dji	-lyi	-ri	yi
djo	-lyo	-ro	yo
djoo	-lyoo	-roo	yoo
dwa	ma	-rda	
dwe	maa	-rdaa	
dwi	me	-rde	
dwo	mi	-rdi	
dwoo	mo	-rdo	
	moo	-rdoo	

By having these in front of you it will help to make the sounding of words an easier process.

2.1 Syllables

A syllable is a single sound/s, which can make up the parts of a written word. Syllables are made up of patterns, which are really helpful when sounding out words.

The patterns may be:

consonant vowel or **cv**

kari is made up of 2 syllables – ka/ri = **cv/cv** *(karri tree)*

bidibaba is made up of 4 syllables – bi/di/ba/ba = **cv/cv/cv/cv** *(tired)*

or

consonant vowel consonant or **cvc**

maambart is made up of 2 syllables – maam/bart = **cvc/cvc**

daambart is made up of 2 syllables – daam/bart = **cvc/cvc**

In Noongar the stress is always on the first syllable, which is unlike English where in many words the stress is on the second syllable.

Try to sound out these words that have been broken into syllables with the stress on the first syllable in **bold**.

yong/ka – yongka (*kangaroo*)

dje/na – djena (*foot*)

ka/ri – kari (*karri tree*)

bi/di/ba/ba – bidibaba (*tired*)

dji/ba-**djo**/ba/liny – djiba-djobaliny (*swimming*)

Add more Noongar words to your own list and sound them out.

3. Spelling and writing Noongar words

As the Noongar language revival grows stronger and stronger many people want to know how to write Noongar. Remember to always ask a Noongar speaker to pronounce words of which you are unsure.

3.1 The Noongar spelling system (orthography)[2]

Most Noongar words start with a **consonant**.

A small number start with a **vowel**.

The vowels

a **a**lidja (*that*), aliwa *(look out)*, manatj *(cockatoo/police)*, beginning, middle or end or words.

aa m**aa**ra *(hands)*, k**aa**-k**aa** *(kookaburra)*, middle of end of words, not at the beginning.

e **e**roodoo or yeroodoo *(hardheaded duck),* keba *(water),* beginning or middle of words, not at the end.

i **i**djarap or y**i**djarap *(snapper),* b**i**d**i**baba *(tired)*, d**i**lb**i** *(fresh leaf)*, beginning, middle or end of words.

o y**o**k (woman), wil**o** *(curlew)* middle or end of words, not at the beginning.

oo **oo**da or w**oo**da *(Brush bronzewing pigeon)*, N**oo**ngar *(man)*, wandj**oo** *(greeting)*, beginning, middle or end of words.

The digraphs

ly, **rd/rt**, **rl**, **rn**, are only found in the middle or end of words.

kw, **bw**, are only found at the beginning of words.

ng, **ny**, are found at the beginning, middle and end of words.

tj, **rt**, are only found at the end of words.

The single letter consonants

r, l are only found in the middle or end of words.

p, **t**, are only found at the end of words

n, **w, y**, are found at the beginning, middle and end of words

The letters

p, t, tj, rt only occur at the end of words.

2 Whitehurst, R 1997, 2nd edn, *Noongar Dictionary*, Noongar Language and Cultural Centre, Bunbury, WA.

3.2 Spelling rules

The following pairs of letters represent the same sounds, however they are written with different letters depending on whether the sound is in the beginning, middle or end of a word.

p and **b** are the same sound

d and **t** are the same sound

tj and **dj** are the same sound

rt and **rd** are the same sound

g and **k** are the same sound. (In the south-eastern dialect the g and k are interchangeable. The **g** often occurs as an initial sound as in the English word **g**o).

At the beginning of a word use		In the middle of a word use		At the end of a word only use	
b	**b**aalap	**b**	ka**b**arli	**p**	baala**p**, ke**p**
d	**d**abakarn	**d**	men**d**itj	**t**	biri**t**, balyi**t**
dj	**dj**idi-**dj**idi	**dj**	daa**dj**a	**tj**	naa**tj**, we**tj**
		rd	kaa**rd**a	**rt**	dwe**rt**

Note

1. **a** makes the sound as in **a**bout or medi**a** (e.g. **a**lidj**a**, yongk**a**) But when **y** follows **a**, then it makes **ay** as in h**ay** sound, e.g. w**ay**itj, bal**ay**i
2. **o** makes an **or** sound, e.g. y**o**k but with a **y** makes an **oy** sound, e.g. b**oy**a, m**oy**ran, k**oy**itj, n**oy**itj.
3. **g** and **k** are interchangeable in the south-eastern dialect, with often occurring as an initial sound.
4. Always use the Noongar orthography (spelling system) to be consistent in writing Noongar but maintain your dialect. E.g. the word for emu should be written according to the way it is said in your dialect, e.g. wayitj, wetj, widiyi, wadjer.
5. Remember that on rare occasions there may be an exception to the rule, particularly when words begin with a vowel. (See examples p.9)

4. Using words and sentences in Noongar

The words in a language may be put into groups that play a similar role and have similar types of meanings within a sentence. These are known as parts of speech and are important to know when making sentences.

The main parts of speech in Noongar include:

Nouns: the name of something

wetj *(emu)*, boya *(rock)*, maaman *(man)*

Pronouns: a word used instead of a noun

ngany *(I)*, noonook *(you)*, baal *(he/she/it)*, baalap *(they)*, ngalak *(we)*

Adjectives: describing words

koodjal *(two)*, moorn *(black)*, koomba *(big)*

Verbs: action words

nyininy *(sitting)*, yaakiny *(standing)*, djiba-djobaliny *(swimming)*

Adverbs: modifies the verb or tells us how the action is being done

kert-kert *(fast)*, dabakarn *(slow)*

Prepositions: words that connect a noun or pronoun, or noun phrase to another noun

-ak/-k *(in/on)*, -ngat *(by/near/emphasis)*, -al/-l *(with)*, -koorl *(towards)*, -ool *(away from/out of)*. Wetj baal marlak-ngat. *(Emu it bush-in. The emu is in the bush.)*. See section 4.5.2 on suffixes.

4.1 Making phrases and sentence patterns in Noongar

4.1.1 Word order

The order of the words in a Noongar sentence is very different from that in English. It is one of the few Aboriginal languages in Australia that has a 'fixed word' order in most cases but can vary in the case of transitive verb sentences. See 4.4.4 and 4.5.2a.

By repeating sentence patterns it is very easy to learn a number of phrases in a short time. Remember in Noongar there is no definite article (the), or indefinite article (a or an) as there is in English.

Let's start with a simple phrase using:

subject (noun) + location.

Koomool boorn-ak. *(Possum tree-in. The possum is in the tree.)*

Kaa-kaa boorn-ak. *(Kookaburra tree-in. The kookaburra is in the tree.)*

Djidi-djidi boorn-ak. *(Willy-wag tail tree-in. The willy-wag tail is in the tree.)*

Yongka boya-k. *(Kangaroo rock-on. The kangaroo is on the rock.)*

Kaarda boya-k. *(Race-horse goanna rock-on. The race-horse goanna is on the rock.)*

Noorn boya-k. *(Snake rock-on. The snake is on the rock.)*

Now let's change the **noun** to a **pronoun**.

baal – he, she or it

Baal keba-k. *(He/she/it water-in. He/she/it is in the water.)*

baalap – they

Baalap djooraly-ak. *(They grass-on. They are on the grass.)*

In Noongar to show a preposition such as in, on, at, with, to, from, a **suffix** (or ending) needs to be added to the noun or pronoun, (ie. substantive or real thing)

In the above sentences, the suffix **-ak** or **–k** has been added to the location words to show that the sentence says: **in** the tree; **on** the rock.

Note

-k: if a word ends in a **vowel** such as a, aa, i, o, oo then the suffix will only be **–k** as in boya**-k**, keba**-k** as shown in the sentences above and below.
-ak: if the word ends in a **consonant** then the suffix will be **-ak**

Now let's add a **verb** or an action word
The word order for these sentences is:

subject + location + verb

(Subject-doer-actor (noun or pronoun), location - where it is happening, verb – action)

Dwert boya-k **yaakiny**. *(Dog rock-on standing. The dog is standing on the rock.)*

Yongka boya-k **yaakiny**. *(Kangaroo rock-on standing. The kangaroo is standing on the rock.)*

In the sentence below the word order is:

subject + object + verb

(Subject-doer-actor (noun or pronoun), object - who or what the action is being done to, verb - action)

Koodjal dwert yongka baakaniny. *(Two dogs kangaroo biting. Two dogs are biting the kangaroo.)*

Keny kwila djildjit baakaniny. *(One shark fish biting. One shark is biting the fish.)*

Daambart djerap boorn-ak nyininy. *(Three birds tree-in sitting.)*

Baalap boorn-ak nyininy. *(They tree-in sitting.)*

4.2 Subject marker pronoun

If we don't have pictures or some visual support to see what is happening, or an adjective such as 1, 2, 3, etc or a pronoun to tell us how many, then we need to put in a **subject** - doer marker **pronoun** to let the reader know if it is keny yongka *(one kangaroo)* or boola yongka *(many kangaroos)* performing the action.

Keny yongka boya-k yaakiny.*(One kangaroo rock-on standing.)*

Ngalang yongka boya-k yaakiny. *(Our kangaroo rock-on standing)*

The word order in the sentences below is:

subject + **pronoun** + **location** + **verb**

(Subject/doer, marker pronoun, location, verb)

Yongka **baal** boya-k yaakiny. (*Kangaroo it rock-on standing. The kangaroo is standing on the rock.)*

Djildjit **baalap** keba-k djiba-djobaliny. *(Fish they water-in swimming. The fish are swimming in the water.)*

4.3 Extending sentences

4.3.1 adding an adjective

An **adjective** may be a colour, size and/or number.

In the sentences below the word order is:

adjective + **subject** + **pronoun** + **location** + **verb**

(adjective, subject/doer, marker pronoun, location, verb)

Koomba mirda yongka baal boya-k yaakiny. (*Big red kangaroo it rock-on standing. The big red kangaroo is standing on the rock.)*

Nyit wooyan djildjit baalap keba-k djiba-djobaliny. *(Little blue fish they water-in swimming. The little blue fish are swimming in the water.)*

Koodjal yoont djerap baalap boorn-ak nyininy. *(Yellow birds they tree-in sitting. The yellow birds are sitting in the tree.)*

4.3.2 adding an adverb

An **adverb** modifies a verb or gives extra information about an action, e.g. manner (how an action is done), direction (where the action is happening). The adverb precedes a verb in a sentence.

Boola-boola yerderap keba-k **dabakarn** koorliny. *(Lots lots ducks water-in slowly moving. Lots and lots of ducks are moving slowly in the water.)*

Koolangka baalap koomba boorn-ak **kert-kert** djakoorliny. *(Children they big tree-to quickly running. The children are running quickly to the big trees.)*

4.3.3 adding a preposition

A **preposition** is a word that connects a noun or pronoun, or noun phrase to another noun. (*The emu is* **in** *the bush)* A preposition is added to the noun or pronoun in a sentence.

Maambart baal boorn**-ngat** yaakiny. Boorda baal bilya-koorl kitj-al wer baam koomba djildjit baal**any-al**. *(Dad he tree-by standing. Later he river-towards spear-with and killed big fish it-with. Dad was standing by the tree. Later he went to the river with his spear and killed a big fish with it.)*

4.3.4 adding a conjunction

A **conjunction** is a word used to join or connect words, phrases and sentences. These words help to extend our language in sentences and stories.

The following table gives only a few examples. In your dialect there may be more.

English	Noongar	Example
that/there, who/whom, which, where or when.	**ali**	Ngalang djookan kaadatj **ali** baalap doora kert-kert djakoorl. *(Our sisters knew that they should quickly run)* Ngalak djinang **ali** kwibil nganyang daatj. *(We saw who hid my meat.)* Ngany ngaarn boola karil **ali** ngany barang maambakoort-ak. *(I ate lots crabs which I caught sea-in. I ate lots of crabs which I caught in the sea.)* Nidja boorn baal **ali** ngany ward koodjal noorook.*(This tree it where I found two eggs. This is the tree where I found two eggs.)* Nadjool koorl **ali** ngany nganop ngaarniny. *(Will go when I stop eating. I will go when I stop eating.)*
or	**ka**	Maambart waangkin ngalak doora waab **ka** doora djildjit –koorl. *(Father said we should play or should fish-go. Father said we should play or go fishing.)*
again	**karo**	Kongk bilya-koorl **karo** barang ngardi ngardi djildjit. *(Uncle fish-went again to get more more fish. Uncle went to the river again to get more and more fish.)*

English	Noongar	Example
already	**kori**	Ngooni baalap maambakoort-ngat **kori** baalabany djookan-ak yalakidjiny. *(Brothers they sea-by already their sisters-for waiting. The brothers are already at the sea waiting for their sisters.)*
while	**koram**	Ngalak bilya-koorl **koram** baal midjaliny. *(We river-went while it raining. We went to the river while it was raining.)*
before	**kwadjat**	Ngalak djinang Kabarli **kwadjat** ngalak miya-koorl. *(We saw grandmother before we home-went. We saw Nanna before we went home.*)
if	**mining**	Ngany boorda dookern **mining** noonook djildjit barang. *(I later cook if you fish get. I will cook later if you get a fish.)*
and	**wer**/ **koodjir**	Ward kwondong **wer** mal marlak-ngat! *(Find quandong and berries bush-in! Look for quandong and berries in the bush!)*

4.4 Verb tense

4.4.1 Present and infinitive

The most commonly used tenses in conversation are the present and the use of the infinitive or the root/base of a verb.

In each of these examples the verb is at the end of the sentence.

Present tense (used when an action is happening right at this time)

Baalang djook baal keba **doorakiny**. *(His sister she water drinking. His sister is drinking water.)*

Infinitive tense (the root of the verb is often used when questions are asked)

Naatj noonook **djinang**? *(What you see? What do you see?)*

Tense	Noongar example	English
infinitive	ngaarn	to eat
present	ngaarniny	eating

4.4.2 Continuous, future and conditional

In Noongar an adverb may also be used to indicate verb tense, i.e. to give more information about when an action will happen.

In the examples below the verb/action comes at the end of a phrase or sentence.

Continuous tense

Nganyang dwert baal **kalyakoorl ngaarniny**. *(My dog it always eating. My dog is always eating.)*

Future tense

Ngany **boorda ngaarn**. *(I later eat. I will eat later.)*

Conditional tense

Moyran baal menditj, baal **doora ngaarn**. *(Grandfather he sick, he should eat. Grandfather is sick, he should eat.)*

Tense	Noongar example	English
continuous	kalyakoorl ngaarniny	always eating
future	boorda ngaarn	will eat later
conditional	doora ngaarn	should eat

4.4.3 Past and imperative

In both these examples, the verb/action comes at the beginning of the sentence or phrase.

Past tense (When the action has already happened.)

Maaman baal **ngardang** yongka. *(Man he hunted kangaroo. The man hunted the kangaroo.)*

Imperative tense (If a command is being given.)

Djinang dwert-ak! *(Look dog-at! Look at the dog!)*

Tense	Noongar Example	English
imperative/command	ngaarn	eat!
past	ngaarn	ate

4.4.4 Transitive verbs and intransitive verbs

These follow the same patterns as listed above but when a suffix is added to the subject in a transitive verb sentence, the word order may vary. See section 4.5.2a on suffixes.

Transitive verbs[3] (Requires a subject and an object.)

Dwert-**il** baal nop baakaniny. *(Dog-subject/ergative he boy biting. The dog is biting the boy.) OR*

Dwert-**il** baal baakaniny nop. (*Dog-subject/ergative he biting boy. The dog is biting the boy.)*

Yoka-**l** baalap ngaarniny mereny. *(woman-subject/ergative (they) eating food. The women are eating the food.)* OR

Yoka-**l** mereny ngaarniny.*(woman-subject/ergative eating food. The women are eating the food.)*

Intransitive verbs (Only requires a subject.)

The ergative/subject suffix is not required in **intransitive** verb sentences.

Ngooni baalap waabiny. *(Brothers they playing. The brothers are playing.) OR*

Ngooni waabiny. *(Brothers playing. The brothers are playing.)*

Koolangka baalap koorliny. *(Children they going. The children are going.) OR*
Koolangka koorliny. *(Children going. The children are going.)*

4.5 Suffixes[4]

A suffix is an ending that may be added to a verb, noun or pronoun.

4.5.1 Verb suffixes

In Noongar a suffix or ending is added to verbs to show the present tense or to show that something is happening right now.

Maaman baal yalakidj**iny**. *(Man he waiting. The man's waiting.)*

Dwert baal nyini**ny**. *(Dog he sitting. The dog's sitting.)*

4.5.2 Noun and pronoun suffixes

Many meanings are shown in English with a preposition such as in, on, to, with, etc. In Noongar these are added to nouns or pronouns.

3 & 4 Douglas, W.D. 1976, 2nd edn, *The Aboriginal Languages of the South West of Australia*, Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Canberra; Rooney, B. 2011, *The Nyoongar Legacy*, Batchelor Press for the Benedictine Community New Norcia Inc. and the Noongar Language Project, NT; Bindon, P & Chadwick, R 1992, *A Nyoongar Wordlist from the South-West of Western Australia*, Western Australian Museum, Perth, Western Australia; Von Brandenstein,C.G. 1988, *Nyungar Anew*, Pacific Linguistics, A.N.U. Series C Number 9.

Suffixes	Meaning	Example of use
-a, -ka	plurals	djen *(foot)* djen**a** *(feet)* koolang *(child)*, koolang**ka** *(children)*
-ak, -k, -ngat	on, in, at (locative)	boorn *(tree)* boorn**-ak** (*tree-in - in the tree)* bilya *(river)* bilya**-k** *(river-in - in the river)* marlak *(bush),* marlak**-ngat** *(bush-in - in the bush)*
-ak, -k	for, by (purposive)	daatj *(meat)* daatj**-ak** *(meat-for - for meat)* bardi *(withchetty grub)* bardi**-k** *(witchetty grub-for - for witchetty grub)*
-al, -l	with, by means of	kitj *(spear)* kitj**-al** *(spear-with - with a spear)* boya *(rock)* boya**-l** *(rock-with - with a rock)* baalabany *(them)* baalabany**-al** *(them-with - with them)*
-an / -ang	possession	noon**an** Kabarli *(your Grandmother)*, ngal**ang** kaditj-kaditj *(our car)*
-ap, -p	place of	boorn**-ap** *(tree place, place of the tree)* yongka-**p** *(kangaroo-place - place of kangaroos)*
-koorl	movement towards	keba**-koorl** *(water-went - went to the water.)*
-ool	from, away from, out of	bilara werd boorn**-ool.** *(leaf fell tree-from. The leaf fell from/off the tree),* kep**-ool** *(out of the water),* noorook**-ool** *(out of the egg)* *(The* **–ool** *suffix clearly identifies movement away from, out of and does not rely on using another word or context to make the meaning clear.)*
-ngat	by, near, for emphasis	keba**-ngat** *(water-near - near the water)* baalany**-ngat** *(it - near, near it)*
-biny, -abiny	to become	boodja**-biny** *(dirt-become - turning to, becoming dust)* moorditj-**abiny** *(strong-becoming - becoming strong/er)*
-mokiny	like/as,	dwert**-mokiny** *(dog-like - like a dog)* baalany**-mokiny** *(it/him/her-like - like it, him, her)*
-boorong	having/existing/is	moorn**-boorong** *(dark-having - becoming dark)*
-boort, -broo	negative, no, not, without	dwangka**-boort** *(deaf),* kadatj**-boort** *(unable to think, ignorant),* bwoka**-broo** *without a coat)Some examples were also recorded where* **-boort** *was added to a verb. E.g.* koorl(a**)-boort** *(don't go),* djinang**-boort** *(don't look)*

Suffixes	Meaning	Example of use
-kadak	have, is with	mereny-**kadak** *(with food)* Nop baal (barang) dwert-**kadak**. *(The boy has a dog / is with a dog)* *(Using the suffix* **–kadak** *means you do not have to include the barang verb in the sentence)*
-mit	able to, used for	Yongka maap baalap warn bwoka-**mit**. *(Kangaroo skin they used coat-for. Kangaroo skin was used for a coat.)* Kitj-al baal daatj-**mit** baranginy. *(A spear is used for getting meat)* Dwert-al baal kwab-**mit** yongka ngardanginy. *(A dog is good for hunting kangaroo)*
-koop	inhabitant, dweller, belong to	bilya-**koop** *(river dweller),* djerap bilya-**koop** *(river birds),* barna marlak-**koop** *(bush animals)*
-djil	very, indeed	kwaba-**djil** (*very good),* boondo-**djil** *(certainly – true very),* moorditj-**djil** (*very strong, very good)*
-mart	same species, same family	wardong-**mart** *(crow family, moiety)* mana**tj-mar**t *(sulphur crested cockatoo family, moiety)* *(The word* koorda**mart** [*sweet heart] may have come from this)*

4.5.2a Ergative/subject suffix (Use in transitive verb sentences.)

Suffixes	Meaning	Example of use
-il, -l	agent, subject, doer of action	Dwert-**il** baal baak nop. *(The dog bit the boy.)* Yoka-**l** baalap nop baaminy. *(The girls are hitting the boy.)* *(In the recent past this has been shown by word order i.e. subject, object, action. The –il / -l suffix clearly identifies the subject without the need for strict word order.) See 4.4.4*

4.5.3 Pronoun suffixes[5]

In Noongar the suffixes or endings listed above may be added to pronouns but there are some suffixes that **do not** have a hyphen.

Look at the following table to see which pronouns have a suffix but **no**

5 Douglas, W.D. 1976, 2nd edn, *The Aboriginal Languages of the South West of Australia*, Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Canberra; Rooney, B. 2011, *The Nyoongar Legacy*, Batchelor Press for the Benedictine Community New Norcia Inc. and the Noongar Language Project, NT; Bindon, P & Chadwick, R 1992, *A Nyoongar Wordlist from the South-West of Western Australia*, Western Australian Museum, Perth, Western Australia; Von Brandenstein,C.G. 1988, *Nyungar Anew*, Pacific Linguistics, A.N.U. Series C Number 9.

hyphen to show where the suffix is added on. These are **possessive pronouns** or show that something belongs to them.

4.6 Pronouns

A pronoun is a word that takes the place of a noun.

4.6.1 Possessive pronouns

English subject	Noongar subject	English possessive	Noongar possessive with suffix
I	ngany	my	ngany**ang**
he, she, it	baal	hers, his, its	baal**an** / baal**ang**
they	baalap	theirs	baalab**an** / baalab**ang** / baalab**iny**
you	noonook	your	noon**an**
we (you & I)	ngalak	our	ngal**ang**

Sentences using possessive pronouns

Baalap **ngalang** kaditj-kaditj-ak nyininy. *(They our car-in sitting. They are sitting in our car.)*

Ngalak koorl **baalang** maambart djinang. *(We went his father to see. We went to see his father.)*

4.6.2 Personal objective pronouns

The suffix or ending on personal objective pronouns in Noongar is **any** as shown in the table below.

English subject	Noongar subject	English objective pronoun	Noongar objective pronoun
I, me, my	ngany	mine	ngany**any**
he, she, it	baal	him, her, it	baal**any**
they	baalap	them	baalab**any**
our	ngalang	us	ngal**any**

Sentences using objective pronouns

Ngany djinang **baalabany** marlak-ngat. *(I saw them bush-near. I saw them near the bush.)*

Yang **baalany** nganyang bibool. *(Give him my book. Give him my book.)*

4.6.3 Interrogative pronouns – questions[6]

In Noongar there are a number of words that are commonly used when questions are asked. Suffixes are not added to the interrogative pronoun in Noongar. The following examples are the most commonly used in conversations.

Note: where there are two examples of the Noongar question, it depends on your dialect which one you use

Noongar	English	Noongar example
Naatj?	What (thing)?	Naatj nidja? *(What this is?)*
Ngiyan?	Who (person)?	Ngiyan baal bokadja yaakiny? *(Who, he, she over there standing?)*
Ngiyanaa?	Whose (this)?	Nginap? Ngiyanaa nidja? *(Whose? Whose this?)*
Windji, Windja?	Where (place)?	Windji koodjal yoka? *(Where 2 girls, women?)*
Nadjil, Naadjil?	Why (reason)?	Naadjil baal koorliny? *(Why he, she, it going, coming, moving?)*
Naadjak?	What?	Naadjak noonook warniny? *(What you doing?*)
Nginda?	When?	Nginda baal koorliny? *(When he,she, it going, coming, moving?)*
Naatj boola, Ngalan?	How many?	Naatj boola, Ngalan koolangka? *(How many/how many children?)*

4.6.4 Demonstrative pronouns

These are used when referring to the subject of a sentence. Pointing out the person or thing mentioned or understood. Identify or point to nouns.

Noongar	English	Noongar example
Alidja	that	**Alidja** koomba yongka! *(That big kangaroo! That's a big kangaroo!)* Alidja nganyang kaditj-kaditj! *(That my car! That's my car!)*
Nidja	this	**Nidja** nganyang bibool. *(This my book. This is my book)*. **Nidja** nyit dek. *(This little plant. This is a little plant.)*

6 Douglas, W.D. 1976, 2nd edn, *The Aboriginal Languages of the South West of Australia*, Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Canberra; Rooney, B. 2011, *The Nyoongar Legacy*, Batchelor Press for the Benedictine Community New Norcia Inc. and the Noongar Language Project, NT; Bindon, P & Chadwick, R 1992, *A Nyoongar Wordlist from the South-West of Western Australia*, Western Australian Museum, Perth, Western Australia; Von Brandenstein,C.G. 1988, *Nyungar Anew*, Pacific Linguistics, A.N.U. Series C Number 9.

4.6.4a Positional objective pronouns

Positional objective pronouns indicate the position of the object. This is used in the third person only. Used in the context where it refers to this, it, or that according to its position. The subject for positional objective pronouns is the **demonstrative**.

The suffix on positional objective pronouns is **-iny** as shown in the table below

English subject	Noongar subject	Noongar Positional Objective Pronoun	Examples
this	nidja	**niny** *(for near objects/ things)*	Nidja nganyang koomba djildjit. Djookoorn **niny** nidja kaalak-ngat. *(This my big fish. Put it here fire-on. This is my big fish. Put it here on the fire.)*
he/she/it	baal	**baaliny** *(for midway things or items)*	Djinang koomba yongka baal marlak-ngat nyininy! Ngardang **baaliny**! (*Look big kangaroo it bush-in sitting! Hunt it! Look at the big kangaroo, sitting in the bush! Hunt it!)*
that/those	alidja	**aliny** *(for objects or things far away)*	Alidja baalang kitj! Baal koorditj **aliny** bokadja! *(That his spear! That's his spear! He threw that over there!)* Alidja Waalitj! Ngany djinang **aliny** yirak worl-ak. *(That eagle! I saw that high up sky-in. That's an eagle! I saw that high up in the sky.)*

5. Examples of using Noongar in our everyday lives

5.1 Greetings and farewells

English	Noongar
1st Speaker: Hello! How are you?	Kaya! Noonook moorditj?
2nd Speaker: Hello! I'm well, sick, sad. How are you?	Kaya! Ngany moorditj, menditj, winyarn. Noonook moorditj?
1st Speaker: Yes, see you soon.	Kaya, boordawan.
2nd Speaker: See you soon. (See you later on.)	Boordawan.
Hello / welcome/ acknowledgement	kiya, kwobali wandjoo, wandjoo, yaan, yayi
Goodbye / see you soon/ see you later on	boorda / boorder, poolark /poort/ poordel, bardamal

5.2 Phone conversations

English	Noongar
1st Speaker: Hello! How are you?	Kaya! Noonook moorditj?
2nd Speaker: Hello! I'm well, sick, sad. How are you?	Kaya! Ngany moorditj, menditj, winyarn. Noonook moorditj?
1st Speaker: Yes I'm well. What are you doing?	Kaya ngany moorditj! Naatj noonook warniny?
2nd Speaker: I'm going to the football.	Ngany djenborl-ak koorliny.
1st Speaker: Where are you going?	Windji noonook koorliny?
2nd Speaker: I'm going to Busselton.	Ngany Andalap-ak koorliny.
1st Speaker: Who will you see?	Ngiyan noonook boorda djinang?
2nd Speaker: All the family.	Bandang moort.
1st Speaker: Have fun! Goodbye.	Warn djoorap! Noonook boorda djinang.
2nd Speaker: Thanks. Goodbye.	Kaya. Noonook boorda djinang.

5.3 Extended conversation

English	Noongar
1st Speaker: What's your name?	Naatj noonan kwerl?
2nd Speaker: My name is ____.	Nganyang kwerl _____.
1st Speaker: Where do you live?	Windji noonook nyininy?
2nd Speaker: I live in Perth.	Ngany Perth-ak nyininy.
1st Speaker: Who is your Family?	Ngiyan noonan moort?
2nd Speaker: My family is ______.	Nganyang moort ______.
1st Speaker: Whose your Mother?	Ngiyanaa noonan Ngaangk?
2nd Speaker: My Mother is ______.	Nganyang Ngaangk baal ______.
1st Speaker: How many children do you have?	Ngalan koolangka noonook baranginy?
2nd Speaker: I have 3 children.	Ngany daambart koolangka barang.
1st Speaker: What do you like to do?	Naatj djoorabiny noonook warniny?
2nd Speaker: I like to play basketball.	Ngany djoorabiny badjedborl waabiny.
1st Speaker: Why are you here?	Naadjil noonook nidja?
2nd Speaker: I'm here to learn Noongar.	Ngany nidja Noongar kaadatj.
1st Speaker: When are you going home?	Nginda noonook miya-k koorl?
2nd Speaker: I'm going home later.	Ngany miya-k boorda koorl.
1st Speaker: Goodbye	Noonook boorda djinang.
2nd Speaker: Goodbye.	Noonook boorda djinang.

Glossary

adjective	ad/jec/tive. Adjectives are describing words. E.g. big, small, fat, red, friendly. Adjectives are added to nouns to describe colour, number etc. We can say that adjectives modify nouns and make the meanings of sentences clearer. E.g. Keny kangaroo. One kangaroo. See p.11, 13
adverb	ad/verb. Adverbs are used to modify verbs. They tell us when, where, how in what manner, or to what extent an action is performed. E.g. The dog ran quickly. She walked slowly. Adverbs can be made up of more than one word – adverbial phrases and clauses. See p.11, 13
article: definite article	ar/ti/cle. the –is called the definite article because it is used to indicate something specific. E.g. * The dog is brown. (The dog is specific. It is not any dog.) * I want to sit on the chair. (The chair is specific. It is known to the audience.) See p.11
article: indefinite article	a and an – are called indefinite articles because they are used to indicate something non-specific. * I would like an ice-cream. (The audience knows that the speaker likes ice- cream, any ice-cream.) * I saw a cat yesterday. When to use 'an' or 'a'? 'An' is used instead of 'a' to make speaking easier. 'A'n is used when the first sound of the next word is a vowel sound. Note: consonants can create a vowel sound and vowels can create a consonant sound. The use of 'an' is determined by the sound not the letter. E.g. a house, an hour, a uniform, an unidentified man. See p.11
conjunction	a word used to join or connect words, phrases and sentences. See p.14. 4.3.4
consonant	con/so/nant. All letters in the alphabet apart from A, E, I, O, U (called vowels) are consonants. See p.6
digraph	di/graph. Digraphs are a pair of letters that represent a single speech sound, some of the digraphs in Noongar are: bw, dj, dw, kw, ng, ny. See p. 9
locative	loc/a/tive. A locative lets us know the location or time. See p.11, 12, 14,15

nouns	noun. Nouns are naming words. There are two types of nouns, common nouns are used to name a class of person, place or thing. E.g. city, policeman, cereal. Proper nouns are used to name a specific person place or thing and always start with a capital letter. E.g. Perth, Policeman Pete, Weet-bix See p.10, 11
orthography	or/thog/ra/phy/. The orthography of a language is the letters and spelling system used to write a language. Noongar has it own orthography. See p.9
preposition	prep/o/si/tion. A preposition shows the relationship between a noun or a pronoun and another word in the sentence. E.g. the do is on the bed. Prepositions help us to know the location of a noun. E.g. The dog is in the bed. Prepositions also show us when something happens. E.g. She always talks Noongar. He never drinks coffee. Some prepositions to know: over, under, on, in through, with, beside, often, past, around, beneath, behind, until, upon, within. There are also compound prepositions, e.g. on top of, next to, instead of, in front of, etc. See p. 11, 14
pronoun	pro/noun. A pronoun is a word that takes the place of a noun. There are three types of pronouns, subjective pronouns, e.g. he, objective pronouns, e.g. him and possessive pronouns, e.g. his. Examples of pronouns are, I, me, he, she, herself, you, it, that, they each, few, many, who, whoever, whose, someone, somebody, etc. See p.10, 11, 16, 17
subject	sub/ject. The person or thing that is being discussed or described in a sentence. E.g. The cat ran up the tree. See p.11, 12, 17
suffix	suf/fix. A suffix is added to the end of a word to form a new word. Suffixes in Noongar are added to show a preposition such as in, on, at, with, to, from. Suffixes in Noongar can be added to a verb, noun or pronoun. See p.17, 18, 19, 20
syllable	syl/la/ble. A syllable is a part of language that is an uninterrupted sound. It is the smallest bit of spoken or written expression. All of the words in this list have been broken into syllables so that you can read and pronounce the grammar terms. See p. 7, 8
tense: conditional tense	con/di/tion/al. Conditional tense is a verb tense that indicates that an action is dependent on something happening. E.g. I would eat the apple if it was ripe. See p.16

tense: continuous tense	con/tin/u/ous. Continuous tense means that it can be happening now or in the future. E.g. I am going. See p.16
tense: future tense	Future tense means that something will happen in the future, it has not happened yet. E.g. I will go to the shop. See p.16
tense: imperative tense	im/pe/ra/tiv. The imperative tense is a form of verb that makes direct commands and requests. E.g. Look at the dog. Eat your vegetables. See p.16
tense: infinitive tense	in/fin/i/tiv. The infinitive tense is a simple or basic form of the verb, e.g. come, take, eat, be. See p.15
tense: past tense	past. Past tense means that something happened in the past it is not happening now. E.g. I went. I have been to the shop. See p.15
tense: present tense	pre/sent. Present tense means that the event is happening now. E.g. I go. I play the guitar. See p.15
tense: verb tense	Verb tense is the form of the verb that indicates time. A verb tense not only indicates past, present and future action, but also indicates whether the action is ongoing or complete. See p.15
tense	ten/se. Tense is the grammatical way languages express the time or place at which an event described in a sentence happens. p.15
verb	verb. Verbs are doing words, they can tell us the physical action - to swim, to write, to talk; a mental action - to think, to guess, to consider; a state of being – to be, to appear, to exist. See p.11, 12, 13
verb: intransitive	in/trans/it/iv. In a sentence only requires a subject/actor/doer. E.g. The dog is sitting. He is standing. p.17
verb: transitive	trans/it/iv . In a sentence requires a subject and an object. E.g. The dog is biting the boy. It is kicking the girl. See p.15. 4.4.4, p.19. 4.5.2
vowel	vo/wel. A letter such as a, e, i, o, that represents a speech sound made by a relatively free passage of breath. Letters that are not vowels are consonants. Vowels are a key in forming the syllables of words. See p.6, 9

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